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DIGITAL GOVERNMENT NEWS
SUMMER 2000

Portals

Applications

Security

Planning and Policy

The primary building blocks of digital government

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Washington State Department of
Information Services

**Washington, winner of the
1997 and 1998 Digital State Award**
Progress and Freedom Foundation

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State's digital government plan
takes citizens from

'in line' to online

From online banking to book shopping,

consumers have come to expect —

even demand — one-stop Internet

services. Gov. Gary Locke believes state

government must meet the same

expectations with the people of

Washington, and said a plan just

released outlines the state's approach

for supplying new web-based services

that promise to benefit citizens directly.

The Washington State Digital Government Plan targets three new Internet services to be ready within the year: electronic procurement, joint tax filing for businesses, and obtaining a master business license. The entry point for these transactions will be the state's award-winning web portal, *Access Washington* (http://access.wa.gov), which the governor launched in November 1998.

"Life is changing dramatically, and technology tools that once were the stuff of science fiction are now at our fingertips," Locke said. "What the Digital Government Plan provides is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for us to say 'yes, we can do it' to millions of citizens who want to get out of lines at offices and use the Internet for more one-stop services from state government," Locke said.

Turning government toward the citizen

Making *Access Washington* the citizens' starting point for transactions with government means Washington can offer government services online with the type of easy-to-navigate, secure systems that people have come to expect from private-sector websites.

"The reality we must face is that many people in Washington do not know which agency delivers a given service. To most citizens, we are perceived simply as 'the government,'" Locke said. "If the state's Internet services are available through a single easy-to-use entry, we will realize the promise of digital government, which is service delivery that makes better sense to citizens."

Work began on the Digital Government Plan prior to Locke's November 1999 directive to streamline agencies' internal business processes and expand online government services to provide easier access for the public. A cornerstone of the plan is agency collaboration in three key areas: Internet applications, infrastructure and policy.

Build it once

According to Steve Kolodney, Department of Information Services' director, reaching the plan's goal of a "one-face" online government will depend on tightly coordinated cross-agency work. "We are stressing a 'build it once' approach to project managers across the state, asking them to work together to apply existing architecture, security components and common elements to new projects," Kolodney said.

The plan was developed under the guidance of the Information Services Board, a policy and planning body that has been given legislative mandate for the stewardship and management of the state's information technology resources. The plan synthesizes the work of the ISB, the Electronic Commerce Executive Steering Committee, the Technology Architecture Advisory Group and the DIS Customer Advisory Board.

State signs master contract for certification authority services

Selection advances the digital government agenda, helps progress of new online transactions planned for *Access Washington*

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scott@dis.wa.gov or call 360 902-3460

The Department of Information Services this spring signed a contract with Digital Signature Trust (www.digsigtrust.com), a Salt Lake City firm that will provide licensed digital certificates for doing legally binding business electronically with the state of Washington.

Under the master contract, any public agency or qualifying non-profit institution may obtain digital certificates from DST for their employees or trading partners. In addition, private parties may obtain digital certificates directly from DST.

"The Legislature put us on an early path to this announcement when it passed the Electronic Authentication Act in 1996, and we are very pleased that Washington is among the first states to provide digital certificates for online business transactions," said DIS Director Steve Kolodney.

Certificates prove people's true identities for online business

A digital certificate is much like a driver's license—a unique piece of identification containing state registration numbers—that certifies the identity of the person who creates and sends an electronic document, payment or other data.

Under Washington's digital signature law, the state can license private, third party businesses as "certification authorities," or CAs, to provide the infrastructure and procedures used to create and verify digital certificates. Digital Signature Trust will act as the licensed CA for Washington's government organizations.

A milestone along the road to digital government

"We are proud of our role in providing digital certificate technology solutions to save taxpayers money and improve government services," said Kolodney. "So many people and authorities worked hard to make government-licensed digital certificates a reality, among them Governor Locke, the Legislature, the Secretary of State, the State Treasurer and the State Auditor——all of whom helped get Washington to this milestone along the road to digital government."

Licensed certificates make electronic signatures legally binding

Digital certificate and signature technologies allow people to send a legally binding "signed" document electronically without having to follow up with a hand-signed paper copy. The value of these technologies to government includes time savings, instant security assurances, and the potential to drastically reduce paperwork in government-to-government and government-to-citizen business.

DIS evaluated proposals from six international firms before naming Digital Signature Trust as the apparently successful bidder. According to Kolodney, an unexpected outcome of the bid process was the emergence of new alignments within the digital security industry, as technical developers discovered potential partnerships with service specialists in the process of approaching the state for its business.

Three state agencies and two health organizations are working with DIS to develop and test policies and technologies surrounding the use of digital certificates. These "early adopters" are the Department of Labor & Industries, University of Washington Medical Center, Department of Health, Health Radius Institute and Department of Retirement Systems.

Master contract makes certificates cost effective and available quickly

Just as Washington has master contracts for business services such as paging and cellular phones, DIS will create a master contract for Digital Signature Trust. This will let Washington maximize its economy of scale with the vendor, and allow agencies to use the approved certification service quickly— without the effort of obtaining digital certification service independently.

Learning about online service delivery at the

Digital Government Academy

Today's e-business challenge is to launch web-based services quickly, and to do it right the first time. To meet this challenge in the public sector, DIS recently opened the Washington State Digital Government Academy: a new place where agencies, private sector experts, and citizen users are collaborating to deliver more public services via the Internet.

Decide, build, publish and replicate

The Academy is a development lab that brings agencies together—away from business as usual—to make decisions about common technology challenges and tackle the cultural change that comes with moving public services to the Internet. Like a university, the Academy is a learning environment where collaboration and invention of the future abound.

The end products of Academy coursework are reusable application templates that will help government agencies avoid re-inventing the wheel when moving their services to the Internet. This 'build it once' template approach is designed to speed up the creation of new online services for citizens, businesses and government entities.

Making online government easy to use

"The collaborative process is really the hallmark of the Academy. We are bringing together the business experience of agencies, the cutting-edge practices of industry experts and the input of citizen customers in highly focused work sessions," says DIS' Dave Kirk, who leads the Academy. "The most important outcome is that agencies are learning—decision by decision—how to deliver their services over the Internet, and how to build them with real usability."

"Right now we're tackling how to beat the so-called 'seven-second rule' that says an Internet user will likely give up on your online service if they can't find what they need within seven seconds of reaching your website," he added.

Academy e-forms class at work

Class is in session: E-forms 101

Six state agencies participated in Permits, the first Academy class, which began in February. Participants worked on different permit projects that their agencies want to move online for public use, including a boat moorage permit from the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission and electrical permits offered by the Department of Labor & Industries. The second round of classes, on creating electronic forms, is under way.

Many private sector partners are bringing their industry knowledge and best practices to project development at the Academy. Experts from Microsoft, IBM, Oracle, Cisco Systems, The Cascade Center at the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington, R&G Associates, LLC, SmartForce, Ciber Alliance Enterprises, Inc. and eProject.com are working with Academy faculty to create and present coursework.

Visit the Academy online www.wa.gov/dis/e-gov/

Academy class decisions, milestones and templates are all published on the web as they develop, so other agencies and government organizations can immediately take advantage of Internet solutions that come out of Academy classes. As Academy participation grows, so will its course offerings and reusable .gov application templates.

Copies of the Academy Charter, class developments and the Washington State Digital Government plan are available on the DIS Digital Government website at www.wa.gov/dis/e-gov/, or by clicking on the "Powered by Digital Government" button on the state's award-winning web portal, *Access Washington.*

Five technology managers receive governor's leadership awards

The 26 recipients of the 2000 Governor's Distinguished Management Leadership Award included five who were honored for their leadership within the state's information technology community.

Mike McVicker and Shelagh Taylor were selected in the Sustaining Leader category, recognizing long-standing leadership in state government. Julie Boyer, Bill Kehoe and John Saunders were selected as Distinguished Managers for outstanding performance and results achieved during the past year.

The highly prized awards, presented by Gov. Gary Locke at a May 16 luncheon, recognize state government managers who demonstrate outstanding leadership in providing quality service to the public.

Mike McVicker

In five years as DIS assistant director for Computer Services, Mike McVicker managed to mend frayed relationships with customers while saving them millions of dollars by consistently reducing rates for data processing and storage. He oversaw the consolidation of two other data centers with the DIS data center, the Pacific Northwest's third-largest data center, and improved internal communications.

McVicker also managed the Vanilla Project, which brought data center users to the same release of software, laying the foundation of Washington's successful Year 2000 Program. In 1999 he became assistant director of DIS' Telecommunication Services Division, where he is leading the transformation of the state's telecommunications networks to the Internet age.

Shelagh Taylor

The Department of Labor and Industries is widely recognized for installing state-of-the-art systems that have improved the way workers' compensation claims are handled, improved L&I's internal and customer communications, accelerated business processes and achieved millions of dollars in new efficiencies by that work. For the past decade, Shelagh Taylor has been responsible for putting much of that technology into place.

Since the mid-'80s, Taylor has led a number of technical projects to improve the way L&I manages and processes workers' compensation claims. L&I gained national attention for the WISE project, which brought imaging technology into the agency. Now L&I can scan and index up to 26,000 new documents each day, providing claims staff with information directly to their desktop terminals. Taylor was also one of the first leaders to recognize and address the Y2K problem. Almost two years before legislative funding became available, she committed agency resources to begin correcting Y2K problems. As a result, L&I began 2000 with no disruption of service.

John Saunders

As manager of the state's Year 2000 program, John Saunders was responsible for the largest information technology initiative in Washington's history: making sure state information systems were ready for the Year 2000 date change. His two years of tireless, cross-agency work enabled the Year 2000 program to achieve Gov. Locke's goals—no disruptions of vital services, and no loss of accountability of public resources. The program became a model for other states.

Saunders was the public face of Washington government's Year 2000 effort. He appeared regularly in the media, and traveled throughout Washington to inform communities about Y2K. The Year 2000 Program also showcased his special talent for managing complex technical projects and demonstrated his ability to bring together diverse groups to work toward a shared result.

Julie Boyer

When Julie Boyer began preparing state agencies for technological changes in the year 2000, her concerns were about much more than numbers and technology. Her first considerations were for people, particularly the developmentally disabled children at the Rainier School in Buckley.

These were the state's most vulnerable citizens who would be at greatest risk if any technical breakdowns occurred.

The governor's office tabbed the Department of General Administration to lead the $40 million project to make sure the state's "embedded" systems—like the Rainier School's heating and fire control systems—continued operating without interruption at the beginning of the new millennium. Boyer organized and then supervised a team of 150 public employees and seven private consulting firms charged with assessing the preparedness of 160 organizations in Washington. And although numbers were important, Boyer kept the focus where it needed to be—on people.

Bill Kehoe

Bill Kehoe, the Department of Licensing's information services manager for vehicle systems, was tasked with three critical projects with implementation dates just days apart: Year 2000 migration, lowering of license fees in accordance with Initiative 695 and a new license plate replacement effort. Successfully implementing just one project would be cause for celebration—implementing all three within three days was truly remarkable.

For Y2K, Kehoe created a plan to test 350 online programs and 200 batch programs that included issue resolution logs and no unplanned down time. As a result, the agency's Y2K migration never was at risk and New Year's Eve was a non-event.

The state's new license plate replacement effort took effect Jan. 1 with over 100,000 plates issued in the first month. Non-standard plates had to be identified and the correct plate replacement fee calculated into the total fees due. The I-695 implementation on Jan. 3 was also successful. More than 130,000 customers were able to conduct business that first day, more than quadruple the average daily transactions.

State social services rank first in 2000 Digital State survey

This year's Digital State survey, a 50-state evaluation of state governments' use of information technology to deliver services to citizens, reached its halfway point with Washington scoring a perfect 100 to take the top state ranking in the social services category.

The first-place rating accompanied a tie for eighth place in the law enforcement and courts category. Rankings in the digital democracy and management-administration categories will be announced in July, with the higher education and elementary/secondary education rankings expected in October.

The 2000 Digital State title goes to the state with the best overall score. Washington is the two-time and only winner.

"These phase-two survey results confirm Washington's progress toward the delivery of digital government. We look forward to continuing our strong performance in the remaining four categories," said Steve Kolodney, DIS director.

Credit for the state's perfect social services ranking goes largely to the state Department of Social and Health Services. DSHS Deputy Secretary Charles Reed said it reflects the agency's successful statewide implementation of electronic benefit transfer systems and child support collection technology to improve client services.

In January, the state ranked second in taxation/revenue and third in electronic commerce—its best results in those categories in the survey's three years.

The Center for Digital Government, *Government Technology* magazine and the Progress and Freedom Foundation sponsor the Digital State survey.
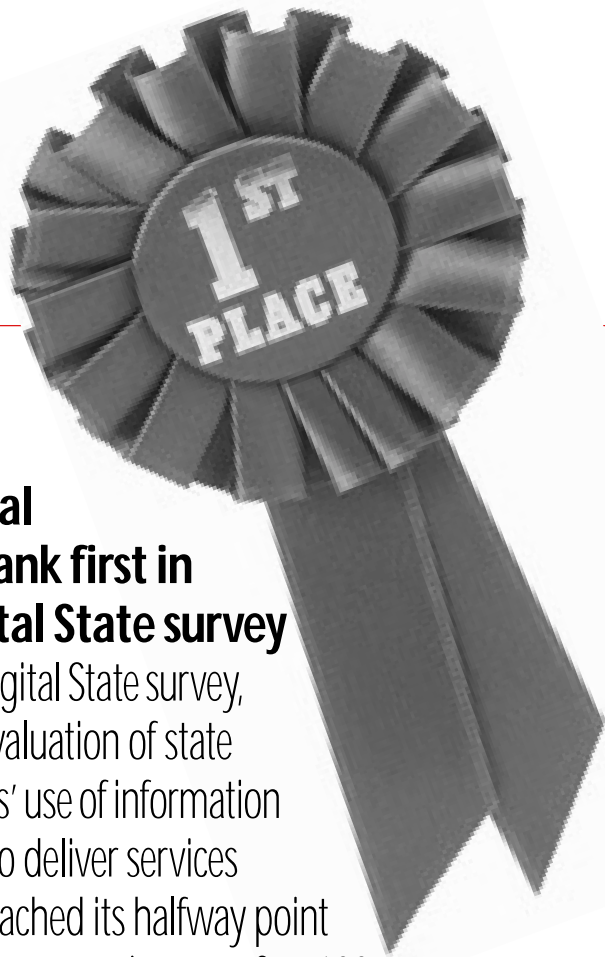
The building blocks

Susie Morgan is far more interested in building medical centers, restaurants, churches and banks than she is in the construction of Washington's digital government.   But each time she goes online to use the state Department of Labor and Industries' contractor registration lookup service, the vice president of EM Construction in Spokane is glad Washington agencies are using the Internet to put citizens like her in charge of their relationship with government.

"Every time we use a new subcontractor I make them fill out a form, and I contact L&I to make sure they are licensed," said Morgan, who doubles as accountant and office manager for the 32-year-old, family-owned light construction company. The web-based contractor lookup service supplies her with information much faster than its telephone-based predecessor, which often had her holding for an answer.

"It's much more convenient than over the telephone, and if I forget to ask a question about the [contractor's] bond, etc. I can always log on easily and obtain that information. Previously, I just thought about being put on hold again," she explained.
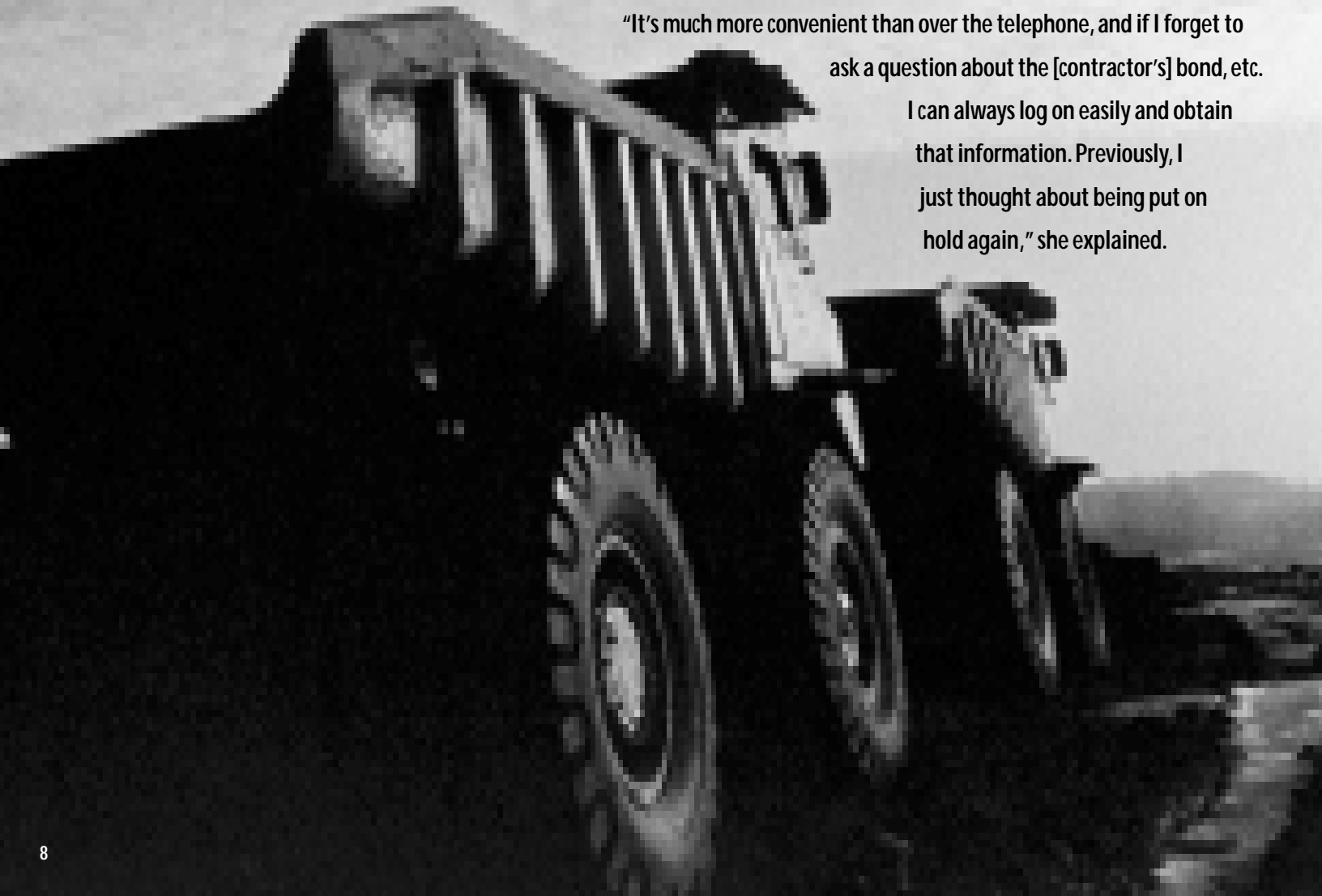
# of digital government

Portals: the place to come together

The L&I contractor registration lookup was one of the charter services available on the state's Internet portal, *Access Washington*, when Gov. Gary Locke formally launched it in November 1998. It exemplifies the portal's focus, which is not on agencies but on function.

Like the equivalent of a library or other public space in a virtual community, *Access Washington* makes information freely available to people regardless of who they are, for whatever need they have. Its popularity is measured by the one million page views accessed by users each month.

A secure marketplace with Trans@ct Washington

Following that virtual community analogy and the "one face of government" approach is *Inside Washington*, Washington state government's intranet portal that debuted in January. It's the place for employer-employee transactions, agency-to-agency services and links for other intergovernmental relations—where employees can do work in virtual offices and meeting spaces.

The latest news for Washington's portals is Trans@ct Washington: not a separate portal, but an extension of them. When it's launched later this year, the portal extension will give businesses and other "trading partners" a place where they are recognized, can complete transactions with security and confidentiality, and can exchange funds.

Trans@ct Washington is the result of a study that showed customers wanted single sign-on capability, so they could present themselves once yet use multiple services. Once you're registered, Trans@ct knows you and lets you visit the applications you have permission to use. At the same time, Trans@ct makes sure agencies control access to the applications they own.

Balancing access with protection

The Internet has conditioned users to expect instant access to information, yet in many instances agencies need to ensure the integrity of the information they deliver. The solution is to drive up the level of trust, and that's where digital certificates come in.

Digital certificates are electronic credentials—issued by a third party—that authenticate parties in electronic transactions. Ultimately, they let the parties in electronic transactions verify who they are dealing with and that the data in digitally signed documents have not changed.

Washington law allows the state to license private, third party businesses as "certification authorities," or CAs, to provide the infrastructure and procedures used to create and verify digital certificates. At the end of March the Department of Information Services signed a contract with Digital Signature Trust, a Salt Lake City firm that will act as the licensed CA for Washington's government organizations (see related story on page 4).

An advantage of digital certificates, when paired with Trans@ct Washington, is that users would need to register just once and present just one credential—not separate user IDs—to gain access.

Receiving and sending funds online

Renewing a license costs money, and an online license renewal service—like those in development—requires electronic payment methods.

DIS is building an infrastructure that will make electronic payment processing services available to any agency customers, so they don't have to host their own secure environment for payments. But the biggest news so far this year on the e-payment front comes from the Office of the State Treasurer, which recently signed a contract with Bank of America to provide merchant bankcard services

The four-year contract covers debit and credit card processing, reporting, and settlement for state agencies and educational institutions. Fourteen state agencies that currently accept debit and credit cards will come under the new contract.

Applications change relationship of citizens, government

The state's Digital Government Plan details the range of government-to-government, government-to-business and government-to-citizen applications available and in development—about 90 in all.

"Once the infrastructure is in place, the 'flowering around the edges' that's going to transform the citizen experience will be truly remarkable," said Paul Taylor, DIS deputy director. "If the starting point is 90 think about where we can be in a year."

The L&I contractor lookup application has changed Susie Morgan's experience with government. It's more convenient, gives her better information and can save her money and hassle.

"I don't make any more inquiries now than I did before, but now I can print out the information I need and put it in the file I have on the subcontractor," she said. "Sometimes I also check on subcontractors after hours because it's less hectic. So there is definitely now more convenient access to needed information.

"For us, we also have the confidence that they are legally licensed and bonded as a contractor. We have been audited by L&I and were pleased to find that all our subs passed—which I already knew. If we hire a subcontractor who is not legally licensed and are audited by L&I, we would have to pay his L&I taxes for the time he worked for us."

Policies ensure that government is accountable

The list of policy issues needing to be addressed is nearly as long as the infrastructure issues: privacy, piracy, security and the state's "collective memory," for example.

The latter refers to the fact that digital government operations do not necessarily leave a paper trail, which puts the ability to audit digital transactions and retain records high on the list.

"The challenge in that case is to meet the high standard of public accountability in ways that don't have us continually hitting the 'print' button," Taylor said.

And just as several organizations are tackling infrastructure issues, a collection of groups is resolving policy questions: agencies, the Information Services Board, the Customer Advisory Board, the Electronic Commerce Executive Steering Committee and a Technical Architecture Advisory Group that draws members from the latter organizations.

The governor's recent call to turn the face of government back toward citizens through digital government makes this a watershed moment for public policy related to service delivery, Taylor said.

Good policy, he explained, allows government to push forward, to fundamentally redesign the citizen experience and do the things that serve as a catalyst for that kind of change. "If we get the infrastructure and policy right, we'll have set the pre-conditions for the delivery of marquee applications as well as thousands of others."

LISTSERV ®
service gives agencies, citizens new communication tool

Citizens wanting up-to-the-minute state government news and information may subscribe to free e-mail lists through a new service from the state Department of Information Services.

LISTSERV® allows one-way broadcasts of news items such as press releases or ongoing e-mail discussions among list subscribers. It also lets Washington state and local governments own lists that enable them to share information quickly and cost-effectively with public customers and other government organizations.

A growing assortment of list topics ranges from ecology laws to electrical contracting updates. Anyone with Internet access and e-mail can join the public lists.

DIS operates the e-mail list service on the widely used LISTSERV® system for creating and managing electronic mailing lists on the Internet. LISTSERV® does not require subscribers to add any new software or plug-ins to a personal computer—anyone with Internet access and an e-mail address can join or leave a list.

The system also features searchable archives, so public subscribers and agency list owners can pinpoint specific topics within a series of e-mail postings.

Citizens can click the black "Email Lists" button on the *Access Washington* front page to learn about the service and to subscribe to a list. New choices are being added frequently to a growing roster of lists.

How state and local governments can become list owners

More detailed information on how the system works, what to expect when joining a list, and how state and local government organizations can become list owners is available at http://listserv.wa.gov. Agencies that want to open a list for public subscribers, or who have questions about using e-mail lists for state government business can contact DIS Customer Services via e-mail at csdcustomerservices@dis.wa.gov or call 360-902-3041.

Locke participates in live interactive webcast

In what was billed as the nation's first locally produced live interactive webcast, Gov. Gary Locke virtually "visited" computer users in May to tell them how Washington state government is transforming its relationship with citizens.

Seattle's KING-TV hosted the history-making event, which featured the governor discussing the state's Digital Government Plan. He described the dozens of free services available through Washington state government's award-winning web portal, *Access Washington.*

Locke's webcast came less than a week after his public unveiling of the plan, the first comprehensive approach developed by a state government to supply the one-stop Internet services consumers have come to expect.

Distance learning study ordered

A new law directs the Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of Financial Management and the state's institutions of higher education to conduct a study on distance education and report to the Legislature no later than January 2001.

The study must address eight elements related to distance education, including effects on capital needs and facility utilization; effects on instruction and faculty, as well as support services; obstacles and cost factors; and the role of Washington's K-20 Educational Telecommunications Network.

Two-year colleges, PDC get tech funding

The Legislature granted community and technical colleges collectively $750,000 for computer hardware and programming services. The colleges will use it to lay the foundation for a one-stop distance learning system students can use to search for classes and complete other admissions tasks.

The Public Disclosure Commission received $674,000 to implement online filing for political action committees and lobbyists and to continue the upgrade of its Internet site. Legislators in 1999 had directed the commission to increase its electronic filing capabilities.

Legislators back state's digital government efforts

Gov. Gary Locke's digital government initiative received solid support in the supplemental budget Washington legislators passed after their regular 60-day session and two special sessions. An initial $10 million appropriation establishes a funding pool that will help agencies launch online services, such as applications that enable citizens to register vehicles or apply for master business licenses over the Internet.

The Legislature also aided Washington's digital government efforts by passing a bill that protects financial information used in electronic transactions. Requested by Locke and sponsored by Rep. Kathy Haigh, D-Shelton, the legislation amends the state's public records law effective July 1 and complements the governor's recent executive order on privacy .

Specifically, the amendment prohibits from inspection and copying: credit card numbers, debit card numbers, electronic check numbers, card expiration dates, or bank or other financial account numbers supplied to an agency for the purpose of electronic transfer of funds, except when disclosure is expressly required by law.

Legislators passed the only bill requested by the state's technology agency, the Department of Information Services. Sponsored by Rep. Cathy Wolfe, D-Olympia, a member of the state Information Services Board, the new law authorizes DIS to provide cost-effective technology services to nonprofit organizations that receive the majority of their funds from government entities.

Private colleges may connect to K-20 Network, FCC rules

The Federal Communications Commission has granted Washington's request to allow private colleges to join Washington's K-20 Educational Telecommunications Network. It waived a June 1997 order that states would lose funding eligibility under the federal "e-rate" program if they connected private entities — such as independent colleges — to state telecommunications networks like the K-20 Network.

In its petition to the FCC, the Department of Information Services argued that non-profit colleges were different than private businesses because of their educational focus and public mission.

Gov. Gary Locke called the FCC ruling "a big win for education in Washington" that will lead to lower costs and improved services for the independent colleges. "By allowing the educational network to connect the independent baccalaureates without penalty, the new FCC ruling offers the potential for expanded learning opportunities throughout our state's education system," added Steve Kolodney, DIS director and chair of the K-20 Educational Telecommunications Network Board.

Such universality is what the Legislature anticipated when it established the educational network in 1996, said K-20 board member David Spangler, president of Saint Martin's College in Lacey, in expressing his appreciation for DIS' efforts.

The K-20 Network serves students and educators from kindergarten through graduate school, supplying high-speed video, data and Internet services to public colleges and universities, private four-year colleges, educational service districts and school districts throughout the state.

Schools connected to the K-20 Network can apply for discounts of 20 to 90 percent on the cost of services they receive from telecommunications carriers. These "e-rate" subsidies come from a $2.25 billion federal program to subsidize technology and telecommunications in schools. Washington public schools receive more than $25 million annually for technology and telecommunications under the federal program.

Governor issues orders on piracy, privacy

The collection of policies supporting Washington's emerging digital government increased by two in April, when Gov. Gary Locke signed executive orders intended to prevent software piracy and protect citizens' privacy.

The anti-piracy order is designed to help Washington state government set an example in acquiring and using legally licensed software. For example, it directs all state agencies to establish procedures to ensure that computer software use complies with the law.

Industry estimates show pirated software costs the state's economy almost 4,000 jobs per year and more than $200 million in lost wages.

The privacy order requires state agencies to take steps to make sure sensitive personal information doesn't go into databases where it can be obtained by irresponsible people or criminals. It represents the toughest rules of any state in the nation to guard citizens' personal information in state computers and paper records, the governor said.

State budget office tailors website to user groups

The Washington State Office of Financial Management has created two new state-of-the-art pathways giving citizens, businesses, local governments and Indian tribes easier access to:

■ **Official population and economic information about Washington's counties and cities.**

■ **Official census information about Indian reservations in Washington.**

As part of Gov. Gary Locke's initiative to use technology and the Internet to build "a groundbreaking relationship between citizens and government," OFM has redesigned its Internet website: www.ofm.wa.gov.

Departing from a homepage that was organized based on the functional units of the agency, OFM has developed a user-driven system of navigation. Visitors to the homepage now find customer-access buttons designed for the following kinds of users: citizens, business, state agencies, local and tribal governments, and people needing special studies and reports.

Among the improvements already in place are two new web features:

■ The new County and City Information "Local Data Links" feature—a map-driven entry point to online data about Washington's counties and cities. It is now possible to go from a map of Washington to numerous official sources of information on local population, economic and financial data for counties and cities. **County and City Information is reachable from several pages on the OFM website, or by this direct link:** www.ofm.wa.gov/localdata/index.htm

■ A new map-driven pathway to population and housing information from the most recent United States census (1990) for each of the Indian reservations in Washington. **Tribal information can be accessed via the new Information for Tribal Governments page on OFM Internet site, or by direct link:**

www.ofm.wa.gov/reservation/index.htm

OFM's website improvements are part of a series of ongoing changes, which are moving the state's financial management agency to a more customer-based online interaction with the public, businesses, governmental entities and tribes.

OFM is providing this service as part of its mandate to collect and manage population, economic and financial data about Washington State. Users of the OFM website are invited to send comments via electronic message to the Webmaster at this online address:

webmaster@ofm.wa.gov

Washington is leader in high-tech growth

More new high-tech companies are popping up in Washington than any other state, according to a report released recently by the Washington Technology Center.

The Index of Innovation and Technology for Washington State reports the state's rate of new company creation is more than 20 percent higher than second-ranking California, and more than double the median rate for all states.

The report also found that Washington has 12 technology-based sectors above the national average in industry dominance. While the aircraft industry still employs the majority of technology workers, that percentage has decreased from 59 percent of total technology employment to 39 percent. Software has increased to 23 percent.

Understanding technology's effect on the state economy is central to her agency's efforts to foster economic growth statewide, said Martha Choe, director of the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. CTED provides funding for the state technology center, established in 1983 to help Washington's companies succeed in the development of commercially viable technology.

Lee Cheatham, WTC executive director and co-author of the report, said the results emphasize the need to support small technology companies. The report, the first of its kind for the state, is available online at www.watechcenter.org

Fishing, hunting license sales to go online

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife will give anglers and hunters the option of buying their licenses online in the next year.

The agency has signed a contract with MCI Worldcom Communications Inc. to develop a system that will allow Washington residents and non-residents to buy hunting and fishing licenses over the Internet or by phone. It will also speed over-the-counter license sales and allow the department to keep up-to-the-minute records of license sales.

Testing of the new Washington Interactive Licensing Database system—known as WILD—will begin this summer at the agency's regional offices, said Bruce Crawford, licensing program manager. Full deployment at all 700 dealers is expected by spring 2001. Telephone and Internet service is expected to be ready by this winter.

Convenience for all

"This system is designed to make life easier for our customers, our dealers and the department," said Crawford, noting that Oregon and Idaho installed similar systems several years ago. "That was our mandate from the Legislature and that's what we plan to do under this contract with MCI."

In addition to the added convenience for customers, the new licensing system will also allow the department to maintain a complete, up-to-the-minute record of license sales, eliminating the need for tallying paper receipts by hand.

The new telephone and Internet service will also allow the agency to collect hunting and fishing survey information more quickly and accurately, giving resource managers better information to set seasons and harvest levels, Crawford said.

Vendor supplies equipment, training

WILD will be financed with a new transaction fee approved by the 1999 Legislature. Beginning March 1, 2001, for example, a resident freshwater fishing license would cost $20 plus a $1.90 transaction fee, which will go to MCI. Customers will still pay a separate dealer-handling fee of $2.00 in addition to the new transaction fee for most purchases.

More information is available on the WDFW website http://www.wa.gov/wdfw

Automated fingerprint system speaks for injured man

The Washington State Patrol's new Automated Fingerprint Identification System, housed in the DIS Data Center, recently made it possible for a WSP fingerprint expert to quickly identify an unconscious, seriously injured man in an Olympia hospital. The story underscores how powerful technology resources like AFIS help law enforcement professionals solve tough problems, reports DIS' Dennis Hausman, coordinator of the state Justice Information Network.

Becky Minor, supervisor of WSP's Tenprint Support Unit and the Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit, had just arrived home from work when she received a police dispatcher's call asking for help identifying the man. Officers said it was likely the man would be airlifted to a Seattle hospital. They and hospital staff wanted to identify him in order to contact a family member.

After returning to her office for fingerprinting equipment, Minor met police at the hospital, fingerprinted the injured man and returned again to her office to query AFIS.

Within minutes, the system scoured a comprehensive fingerprint database and quickly identified the unconscious person. Using the AFIS identification, officers located and contacted the man's mother, who headed for the hospital.

It is rare when a fingerprint unit is called to a hospital to help identify a living person, and extremely satisfying when the outcome makes a difference in people's lives, reports Hausman, a former court administrator.

Attorney general, UW and justice community team up to address online crime and fraud

Attorney General Christine Gregoire and the University of Washington recently joined forces to launch the Consumer and Criminal Justice Cyber Clearinghouse, a comprehensive resource that helps consumers avoid illegal transactions and provides an online avenue for victims to seek recourse.

"Our ultimate goal is to provide one-stop shopping for consumers, law enforcement and educators," said Gregoire. "We're beginning modestly but we will continue to build."

Using the Cyber Clearinghouse, visitors can:
- Remove their names from marketing lists.
- File an online complaint.
- Research up-to-date consumer and criminal issues.
- Get tips for kids and parents to safely surf the Internet.

The attorney general's office and UW soon will launch a model online mediation program that will be accessible via the website. Through a partnership with the UW's Center for Law, Commerce and Technology, consumers and businesses will be able to resolve their conflicts online by summer.

The Center for Law, Commerce and Technology is also conducting research for Gregoire's office and other public agencies on consumer protection, privacy and other Internet issues. "We're going to be providing nonpartisan policy research in this emerging field," said Anita Ramasastry, associate director of the UW center and assistant professor of law. At the request of the National Association of Attorneys General, center faculty and students are also preparing a report on handling consumer cyber disputes.

The attorney general's office has formed a strike team to focus on Internet related crime. The new high-tech unit will prosecute consumer protection and criminal cases as well as provide expertise to local law enforcement on Internet crimes.

Online viewing of bids creates new industry standard

A Department of General Administration program that allows contractors to use the Internet to view proposed public works projects should encourage more competitive bids, reduce costs for taxpayers, and save contractors time and expense. The bid packages are also available on compact disks—complete with all necessary software—for viewing on computers. GA worked with Builders' Exchange, a plan center in Everett, to develop the program.

Said Kip Eder, technical services manager with GA, "The purpose is to make wider distribution of bid packages and to do so faster and cheaper. Together, we have created a new industry standard." Cheri French, the owner of Builder's Exchange, said online access to bid packages saves time and money for all involved. "A lot of contractors use this program," French said. "The response has been explosive." Builder's Exchange includes a membership made up of hundreds of contractors, subcontractors, architects and suppliers from Canada to California and Spokane. They use the online bid packages to gain immediate access to building proposals around the state.

Roger Nickell Jr. of Long Painting in Seattle views the bid packages through Builder's Exchange. "We can't even begin to calculate the dollar savings," Nickell said. "It has saved us traffic time and costs. Our jobs are much easier." The program should be especially beneficial to small contractors. GA annually puts out for bid about 300 state public works projects worth approximately $300 million. Ninety percent of the contracts are for $1.5 million or less.

Eder said the program should increase by 50 to 300 percent the number of contractors who see bid packages for state public works projects. "That increases the chances for lower bids on the contracts," Eder said. "That in turn will save money for the state."

State agencies that contract with GA to oversee their public works projects will save money on printing costs for bid packages. Gradually phasing out paper copies could save the agencies—and taxpayers—$1 million during each two-year cycle of the state budget.

DIS EMall helps government agencies save time and money on technology purchases

Major technology purchases can be a daunting task for any public organization. Making the right choices, meeting competitive requirements and getting the best prices for computing products and services are ongoing challenges. With its new online EMall, the Department of Information Services offers state and local agencies a convenient alternative for planning their technology purchases and maximizing their volume buying power.

The EMall offers a one-stop, online guide to DIS technology products and services, from leveraged purchasing agreements and technology leasing programs to tailored brokering services and more than 40 statewide "Master Contracts."

By clicking on http://emall.dis.wa.gov, government technology customers can "window shop" to see what is available under state contracts before making a final purchasing decision. Then they may either contact a DIS consultant to arrange a purchase, or order directly through the appropriate Master Contract. All purchases made through DIS adhere to the state acquisition policy.

Small orders receive same big discounts

DIS' large customer base—675 organizations including school districts, cities, counties, state agencies, colleges and universities, public utility districts and tribes—means good news for purchasers of any size.

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"DIS is able to maximize the state's leverage by aggregating purchases for many different agencies and local governments," says Bob DeShaye, manager of DIS' technology brokering services. "We can offer high-volume pricing on small orders that, if placed independently, would be significantly more expensive."

Shop from wide range of hardware, software

The EMall offers access to a wide variety of PC hardware—including Compaq, CompUSA, Dell, Gateway, Hewlett Packard and IBM systems— at state contract prices. DIS regularly audits the vendor performance on these agreements, and periodically tests pricing with spot market bidding to ensure the lowest possible price at the time of the order. Government customers also may arrange for customized procurement services, which allow tailoring of purchases to meet unique needs.

Contracts for AutoDesk, Novell, SecureNet and Visio software also are available through the EMall, as is the acclaimed Microsoft Select purchasing program, which is designed to reduce the cost of acquiring, maintaining and managing licensed Microsoft software. Through such programs DIS can offer state and local government organizations discounts normally available only to very large corporate customers.

http://emall.dis.wa.gov